

CAPSULE SUMMARY

BA-2912

Grace African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church

67 ½ Winters Lane

Catonsville, Baltimore County

ca. 1912

Private

Founded in 1868, the Grace African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church is home to the oldest congregation serving the African-American community in Catonsville. The congregation, originally known as St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church, existed prior to the construction of a church building, meeting in the schoolhouse at Winters Lane and Edmondson Avenue. Although other historically black churches existed in the region at this time, Grace A. M. E. Church is the first to have been established within the village of Catonsville. The original church building was moved to the Winters Lane site in 1880 and became a landmark for the African-American community. This historic wood frame building was destroyed by fire in 1910, and the current brick church was erected on the same site in 1912.

The modest church is one-and-a-half stories high, measuring three bays wide and five bays deep. The rectangular plan is augmented by a three-story corner tower, a characteristic of the Tudor Revival style in which the building was originally dressed. It is constructed of brick on the first story with a corbeled limestone watertable marking the slightly raised basement. The brick detailing on the façade is laid in Flemish bond while the side and rear elevations are laid in five-course American bond. The steeply pitched front gable roof, clad in asphalt shingles, is marked with four front gable dormers and an interior brick chimney. The wood frame gable ends of the building originally were decorated with rough-textured stucco and half-timbering, but are now covered with vinyl German siding. The tower, originally trimmed with crenellated detailing, is wrapped with corbeled limestone stringcourses.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-2912

1. Name of Property

historic Grace African Methodist Episcopal Church

other

2. Location

street and number 67½ Winters Lane not for publication

city, town Baltimore vicinity

county Baltimore

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Grace A. M. E. Church

street and number 67½ Winters Lane

telephone 410.744.9478

city, town Baltimore state Maryland zip code 21228

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse tax map and parcel m: 101, p: 2014

city, town Towson, liber 255 folio 346

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	Contributing
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	Contributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	Noncontributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	Contributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	Noncontributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	Contributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Noncontributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	Contributing
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	Noncontributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	Contributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	Noncontributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	Contributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	Noncontributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	Contributing
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	Noncontributing
			Contributing
			Noncontributing
			Total
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			0

7. Description

Inventory No. BA-2912

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one-paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The church building at 67 ½ Winters Lane was constructed in 1912, following a devastating fire that destroyed the original church. The modest church is one-and-a-half stories high, measuring three bays wide and five bays deep. The rectangular plan is augmented by a three-story corner tower, a characteristic of the Tudor Revival style in which the building was originally dressed. It is constructed of brick on the first story with a corbeled limestone watertable marking the slightly raised basement. The brick detailing on the façade is laid in Flemish bond while the side and rear elevations are laid in five-course American bond. The steeply pitched front gable roof, clad in asphalt shingles, is marked with four front gable dormers and an interior brick chimney. The wood frame gable ends of the building originally were decorated with rough-textured stucco and half-timbering, but are now covered with vinyl German siding. The tower, originally trimmed with crenellated detailing, is wrapped with corbeled limestone stringcourses. The building is located in the town of Catonsville on a sloping, grassy lot. It is set back from the street with the paved parking at the rear accessed from the south of the property.

EXTERIOR

The façade of the church, constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond, faces east to Winters Lane. This elevation exhibited the majority of the building's original stylistic ornamentation, yet, because of late 20th century alterations, is now lacking any architectural interpretation. Within the main block, a brick stair and a quarter-turn concrete wheelchair ramp with a metal rail access the centrally placed entry. The original opening holds commercial-style metal and plate glass replacement doors. The double-leaf doors are framed with two-light sidelights and a one-light transom, all edged with metal surrounds. Indicative of the Tudor Revival style, the opening features a drip-mold lintel; however, the lintel is formed by slightly projecting bricks and contrast very little in color or texture with the surrounding brickwork. An original feature, two courses of brick have been installed between the entry opening and the lintel. A standard sized window opening marks the northernmost bay, recessed within the wall plane with rounded brick surrounds. This opening, originally holding casement windows with lancet-arched tracery, has a metal-framed window of stained glass. The lower sash, the smaller of the two panes, is an awning window. It has rowlock header-coursed sill and drip-mold lintel. Like the entry, the lintel over the window is set two brick courses above the opening. A square window opening originally pierced the basement, below the window. This opening has been infilled by the solid concrete wheel chair ramp running along the northernmost bay of the elevation. Within the tympanum of the wood frame gable is a row of four window openings. Originally holding paired casement windows with lancet arches, the opening now have fixed stained glass windows with metal frames.

The three-story brick tower in the southeastern corner dominates the façade. Square in plan, the tower has a single standard window opening on the first story. This opening has a fixed stained glass window with metal frames. A rowlock header-coursed sill surrounds it, with a drip-mold lintel set two courses higher. The second level of the tower is divided from the first by a molded stone watertable, and is pierced by two loophole windows with rowlock sills and brick drip-mold lintels. The top of the tower, laid in stretcher

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-2912

Grace African Methodist Episcopal Church, 67 ½ Winters Lane, Catonsville, Baltimore County
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 2

bond, was originally finished with stucco and half-timbering. The detailing included crosses set within a circle and a crenellated cap. A cornerstone on the southern end of the tower indicates the church was rebuilt in 1912, with Reverend C.H. Murray serving as pastor.

The north elevation is five bays deep and encompasses the main block of the building. Laid in five-course American bond, this side contains a cornerstone with the inscription, "AME Church AD 1880." The cornerstone documents the relocation of the congregation to this site in 1880. The raised basement is marked by a molded concrete watertable, and features four equally placed replacement windows. These include three two-light metal stained glass windows and one 1/1 fixed metal stained-glass window. Each of the windows has rowlock header-course sills and brick drip-mold lintels set two courses higher. A small projecting shed-roof is located at the western bay of the elevation. This bay, which appears to be original, has a single-leaf metal door with a stone sill. Two gable dormers with extended eaves accentuate the roof. The dormers have fixed four-light windows, vinyl siding, and cornerboards.

The rear, or west elevation, is laid in five-course American bond and has a molded limestone watertable delineating the basement level, which is laid in five- and six-course American bond. The raised basement features two 1/1 vinyl replacement windows and a single-leaf sheet-metal fire door with a one-light transom. The shed roof extension on the north elevation is not flush with the west elevation. A limestone cornerstone with the inscription, "Grace AME Church Rebuilt 1902," is located on the north end of the elevation. The cornerstone records the extensive renovation undertaken in 1902 on the previous wood frame church. Two fixed stained glass windows with rowlock header-coursed sills pierce the first story of the main block. The larger window is centered directly below the gable, while the smaller is asymmetrically placed to the north and has a brick drip-mold lintel. The rear gable has been reclad with vinyl German siding and has no openings.

Also laid in five-course American bond, the raised basement of the south elevation is articulated by a corbeled limestone watertable. It features five 1/1 vinyl replacement windows that abut the watertable. Three two-light metal stained glass windows flanked by two 1/1 fixed metal stained glass windows pierce the first story. Each of these openings is embellished with rowlock header-coursed sills and brick drip-mold lintels. Like the north elevation, two gable dormers with extended eaves pierce the roof. The dormers have fixed four-light windows, vinyl siding, and cornerboards. The south elevation of the tower features a single-leaf commercial-style plate glass door at the first story and two fixed stained glass loophole windows at the second story.

The interior of the building was not accessible for survey at this time.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-2912

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Significance dates 1912-1950

Architect Unknown

Specific dates 1912

Builder Unknown

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Founded in 1868, the Grace African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church is home to the oldest congregation serving the African-American community in Catonsville. The congregation, originally known as St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church, existed prior to the construction of a church building, meeting in the schoolhouse at Winters Lane and Edmondson Avenue. Although other historically black churches existed in the region at this time, Grace A. M. E. Church is the first to have been established within the village of Catonsville. The original church building was moved to the Winters Lane site in 1880 and became a landmark for the African-American community. This historic wood frame building was destroyed by fire in 1910, and the current brick church was erected on the same site in 1912.

HISTORY

By the last quarter of the 19th century, a considerable African-American community had established itself along Winters Lane in Catonsville. Many African-American residents found employment as laborers and farmhands, and also as cooks, butlers, gardeners, and maids on the large estates in the village. By 1880, 498 African-Americans inhabited Catonsville. In 1910, seventy-five percent of Catonsville's African-American population resided along Winters Lane and immediately adjacent streets. Secondary, smaller concentrations lived on Asylum Lane, currently Wade Avenue, and Taylor Avenue.¹

Instrumental in community development, the African-American population of Catonsville organized and constructed numerous institutions including churches and fraternal organizations. An 1876 tax assessment ledger indicates that there was a "Colored Building Association of Catonsville."² In addition, Bromley's 1898 *Atlas of Baltimore, Plan of Catonsville* records several institutions supporting the growing African-American population along Winters Lane. Stretching north of Frederick Road, Winters Lane contained the Grace African

¹ Edward Orser and Joseph Arnold, *Catonsville 1880 to 1940 From Village to Suburb*, (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1989), p. 71.

² Neal A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel, *A History of Baltimore County*, (Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979), p. 302.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-2912

Grace African Methodist Episcopal Church, 67 ½ Winters Lane, Catonsville, Baltimore County
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

Methodist Episcopal Church, the Colored Methodist Church (demolished), a meeting hall (demolished), and the colored school (currently the Full Gospel Tabernacle Church). The Catonsville Colored School (circa 1867), located at the intersection of Winters Lane and Edmondson Avenue, continued to serve as the school for the African-American community until a new eight-room schoolhouse was erected in 1923. The 1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate the presence of the Grace A.M.E. Church, the Catonsville School for Negroes, the Morning Star Baptist Church (1896), and the Negro Chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows, all located along Winters Lane between Frederick Road and Edmondson Avenue.

In 1868, the St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church began meeting at the African-American schoolhouse located at Winters Lane and Edmondson Avenue. The school served the African-American community of Winters Lane, sharing its space with the church until 1880. Designated as the St. John's A. M. E. Church, five pastors served in the twelve year period before the congregation moved to its current location: Rev. John J. Hubbard (1868-1870), Rev. John R. Henry (1870-1873), Rev. Charles Hughes (1873-1876), Rev. Daniel Moore (1876-1879), and Rev. Jacob W. Bowser (1879-1883). It was during Rev. Bowser's tenure that the church was moved to Winters Lane and renamed the Grace African Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1879, a wood frame church on Saratoga Street in Baltimore City was purchased and moved to Winters Lane, with the cornerstone being laid in 1880.³ The original date of construction for this earlier building is unknown. Although the cornerstone on the north elevation indicates that the foundation was laid in 1880, deed research indicates that the trustees of the Grace A. M. E. Church of Catonsville did not receive title to the property until 1881. According to church history, the wood frame building was renovated and electricity was installed in 1900, under the pastorate of Rev. William H. Coston. However, the extant cornerstone on the west elevation of the present brick church indicates the wood frame building was rebuilt in 1902. The 1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps record that the frame church had an irregular footprint, was one story in height, and featured electric lighting and a heat furnace.

Very little is known about the earlier church building, having been destroyed by fire in 1910 during the pastorate of Rev. Charles Murray (1910-1916). The church was rebuilt in the Tudor Revival style, with the cornerstone on the façade reading, "Grace A. M. E. Church, Rebuilt 1912, Rev. C. H. Murray, Pastor." Historic photographs indicate the Tudor Revival style ornamentation included half-timbering in the front gable, a motif repeated at the top of the crenellated tower at the southeast corner. Additionally, the original windows and doors featured elaborate tracery with lancet arches. Despite the fact that the windows and doors were replaced, the openings remained the same.

On October 24, 1921, the church celebrated its final mortgage payment with a mortgage burning ceremony. The ceremony was discussed in *The Weekly Clarion*, a weekly publication featuring information on the Grace A. M. E. Church, in addition to printing advertisements for African-American businesses in the community.

³ Louis S. Diggs, *It All Started on Winters Lane*, (Catonsville, MD: Louis S. Diggs, 1995), pp. 57-60.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-2912

Grace African Methodist Episcopal Church, 67 ½ Winters Lane, Catonsville, Baltimore County
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

The Master of Ceremonies for the mortgage burning was Elder Charles Stewart and speakers included Rev. Charles Young, Rev. P. H. Green, Rev. William H. Costen, and Rev. Brown. Ms. Patience Byrd did the honors, lighting the match to the mortgage, signaling that the church was free of debt.⁴

Improvements continued to be made to the church in the following years. In 1930, a pipe organ, costing \$3,000, was installed and between 1930 and 1934 a seven-room parsonage was constructed to the north. Between 1934 and 1938, under the guidance of Rev. W. H. Manokoo, roof repairs were made and the coal furnace was replaced with an oil heating system. Significant changes were made during the last quarter of the 20th century. Between 1970 and 1993, the church upgraded the electrical systems, added office space, constructed a ramp for the physically handicapped, landscaped the property, laid new carpeting on the interior, and installed a kitchen and bathroom facilities. Additionally, they purchased a new grand piano, a van for transportation, and the property across the street for use as a parking lot. A striking alteration during the latter part of the 20th century was made when they replaced the windows, installing the stained glass windows that currently grace the edifice.⁵

⁴ Diggs, p. 101.

⁵ Diggs, pp. 58-59.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-2912

Grace African Methodist Episcopal Church, 67 ½ Winters Lane, Catonsville, Baltimore County
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 4

Chain of Title:

- June 23, 1881: Jacob Bastow, administrator of Rachel Darsey, deceased, to Lewel Gavaus, Phillip Porter Nelson Clarx, John Johnson, William Griffin, George W. Young, John Burke, William H. Hall, William Barnes, trustees for the AME Church of Catonsville
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber 130 Folio 327
- June 24, 1881: Patience and Arthur Cavady to Lewel Gavaus, Phillip Porter Nelson Clarx, John Johnson, William Griffin, George W. Young, John Burke, William H. Hall, William Barnes, trustees for the AME Church of Catonsville
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 130 Folio 325
- August 12, 1901: William Griffin, George W. Young, and John Burke to Grace AME Church of Catonsville
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 255 Folio 346

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-2912

Grace African Methodist Episcopal Church, 67 ½ Winters Lane, Catonsville, Baltimore County
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 5

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:	Piedmont
Chronological/Developmental Period(s):	Industrial/Urban Dominance (1870-1930) Modern Period (1930-Present)
Historic Period Theme(s):	Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning Religion
Resource Type:	
Category:	Building
Historic Environment:	Town
Historic Function(s) and Use(s):	RELIGION/Religious Facility
Known Design Source:	Unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-2912

Baltimore County Land and Will Records. Baltimore County Courthouse, Towson, Maryland.

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County*. Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

Diggs, Louis S. *It All Started on Winters Lane*. Catonsville, MD: Louis S. Diggs, 1995.

Orser, Edward and Joseph Arnold. *Catonsville 1880 to 1940 From Village to Suburb*. Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1989.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Catonsville, Maryland: 1899, 1904, 1910, 1919, 1925, 1930 and 1958.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of project area

Less than one acre

Acreage surveyed

Less than one acre

Quadrangle name

Baltimore West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Grace African Methodist Episcopal Church is located at 67 ½ Winters Lane in Catonsville, Baltimore County, Maryland as noted on Tax Map 101, Parcel 2014. The church has been historically associated with the site since its construction in 1912, although the congregation owned and occupied the property in 1881.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title

R. Weidlich, L. Trieschmann, and C. Novelli, Architectural Historians

organization

EHT Traceries, Inc.

street & number

5420 Western Avenue

city or town

Chevy Chase, Maryland

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

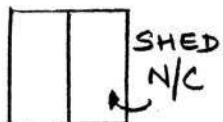
return to:

Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032
410-514-7600

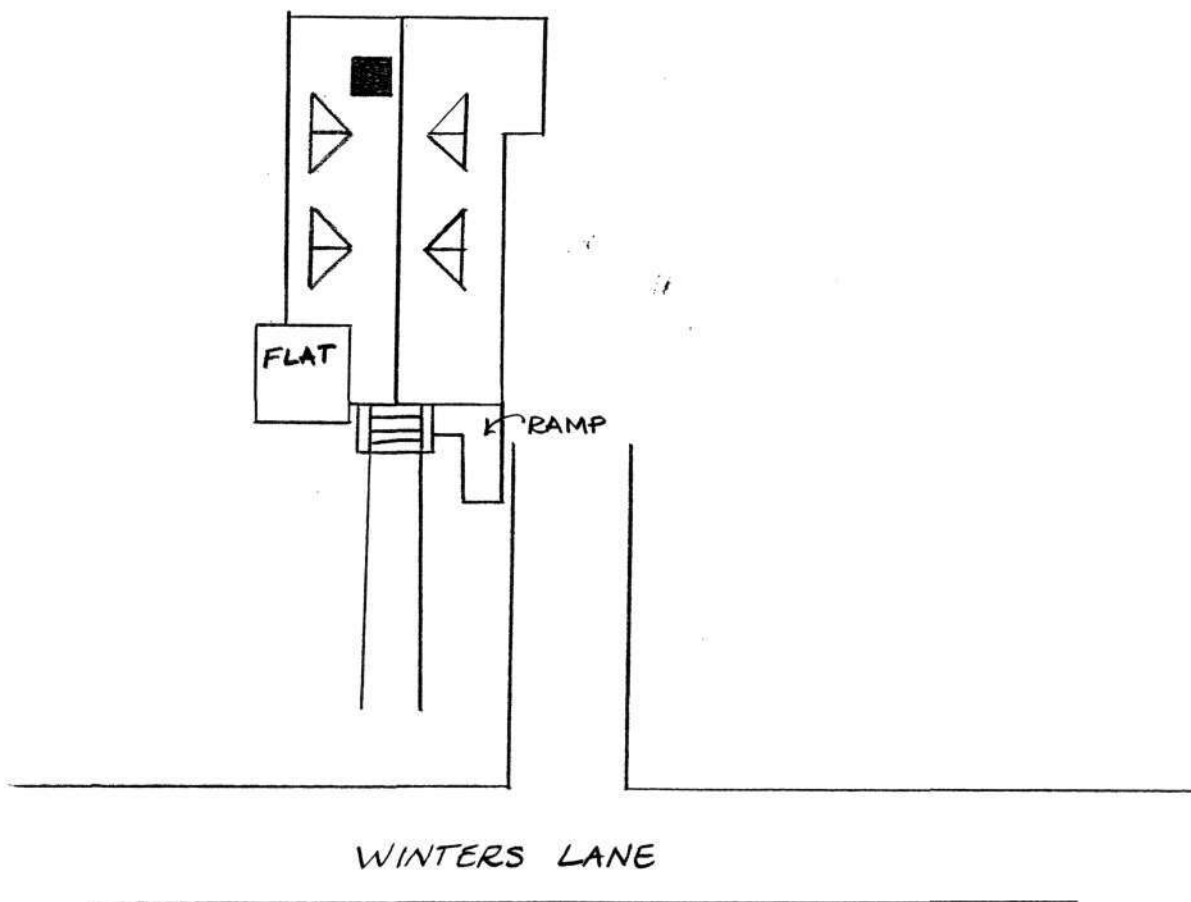
BA-2912

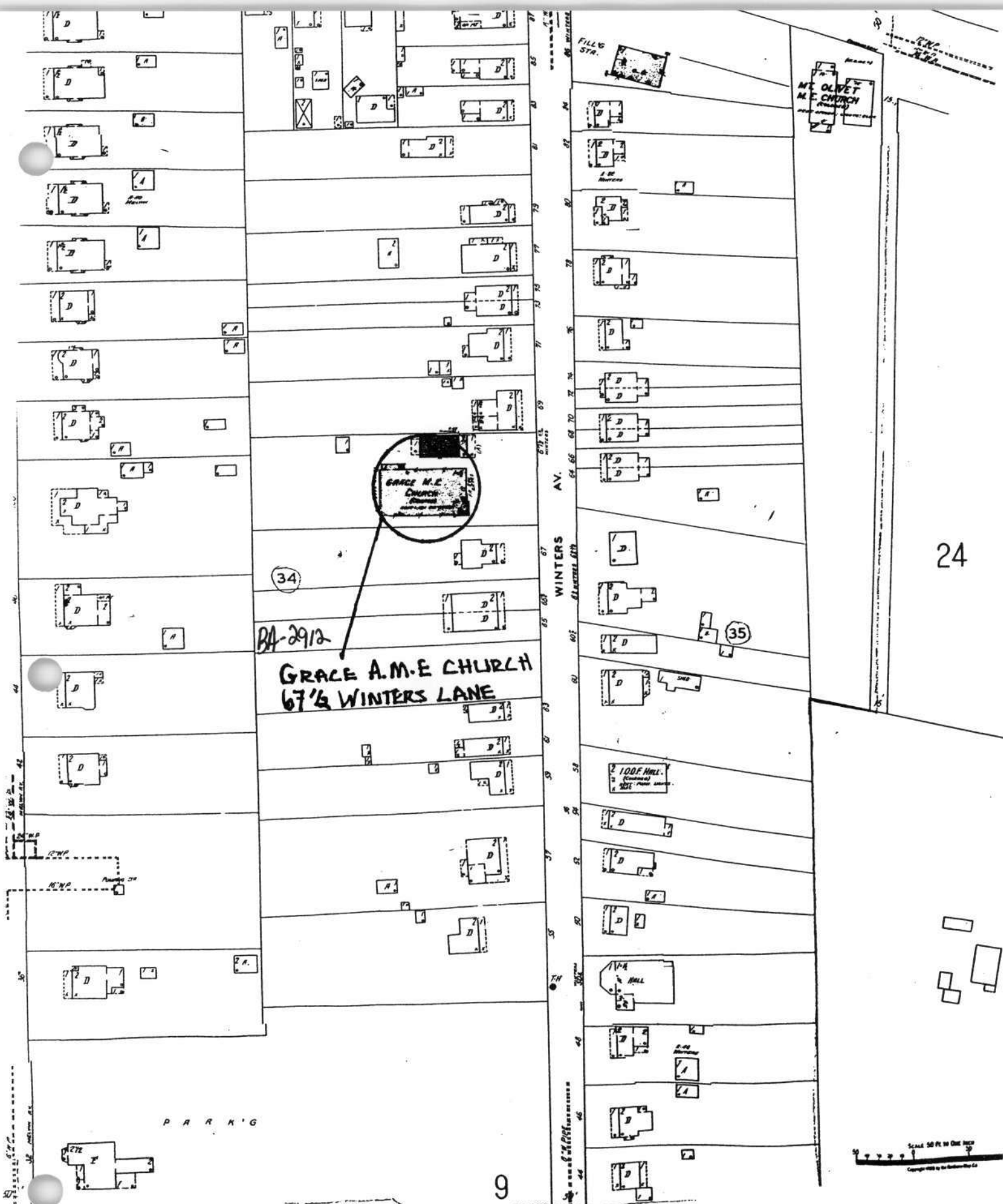
GRACE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
67 1/2 WINTERS LANE
CATONSVILLE, MARYLAND
BALTIMORE COUNTY

NOT DRAWN TO SCALE N →



PARKING LOT





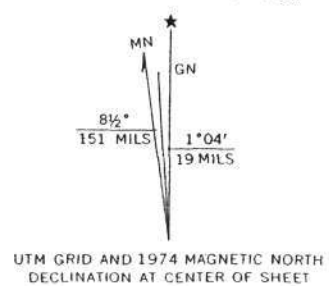
GRACE A.M.E. CHURCH
67 1/2 WINTERS LANE

Catonsville, Maryland
Baltimore County
Sanborn Map 1930, Updated 1958



BA-2912
Grace A.M.E. Church
67-1/2 Winters Lane
Catonsville, Baltimore County
USGS Quad Map: Baltimore West

INCORRECT
LOCATION



A black and white map of Catonsville, Maryland, showing a street grid and topographical features. A box labeled 'BA-2912' has an arrow pointing to a circled location on the street grid. Other labels include 'Banneker Sch', 'INGLESIDE', 'INTERCHANGE 400', '695', 'INTERCHANGE 13', 'ROAD', '4 LANE', '478', 'BLOD', 'PO', 'FREDERICK', 'Water', 'EDMONDSON', and 'CATONSVILLE'.

Tax Map 101, p. 2014





BA 2912

Grace H.M.E. Church

67 1/2 Winters Lane, Catonsville

Baltimore County

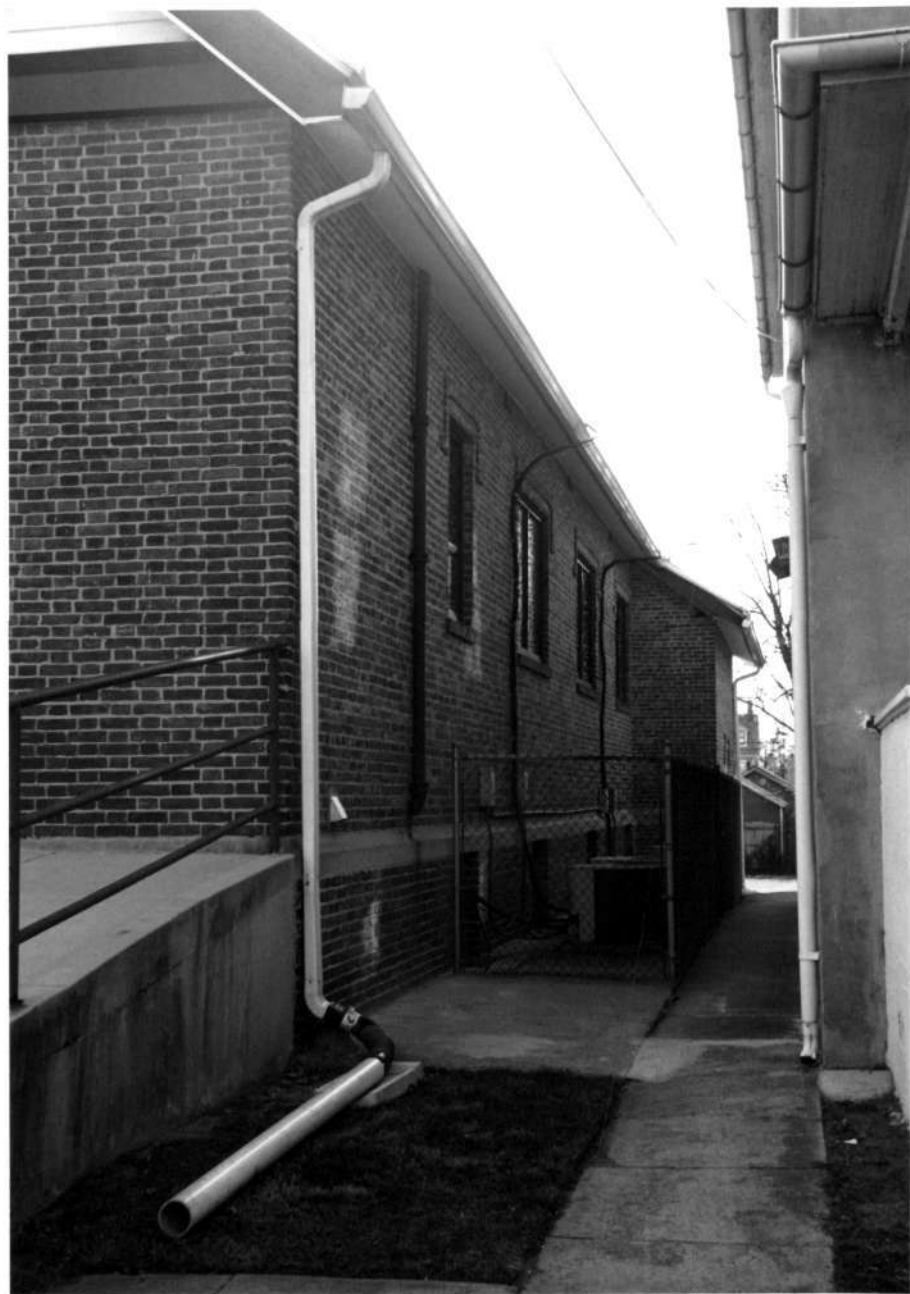
Traceries

1/00

Maryland SHPO

east elevation

1 of 4



BH 2912

Grace H.M.E. Church

67 1/2 Winters Lane, Catonsville

Baltimore County

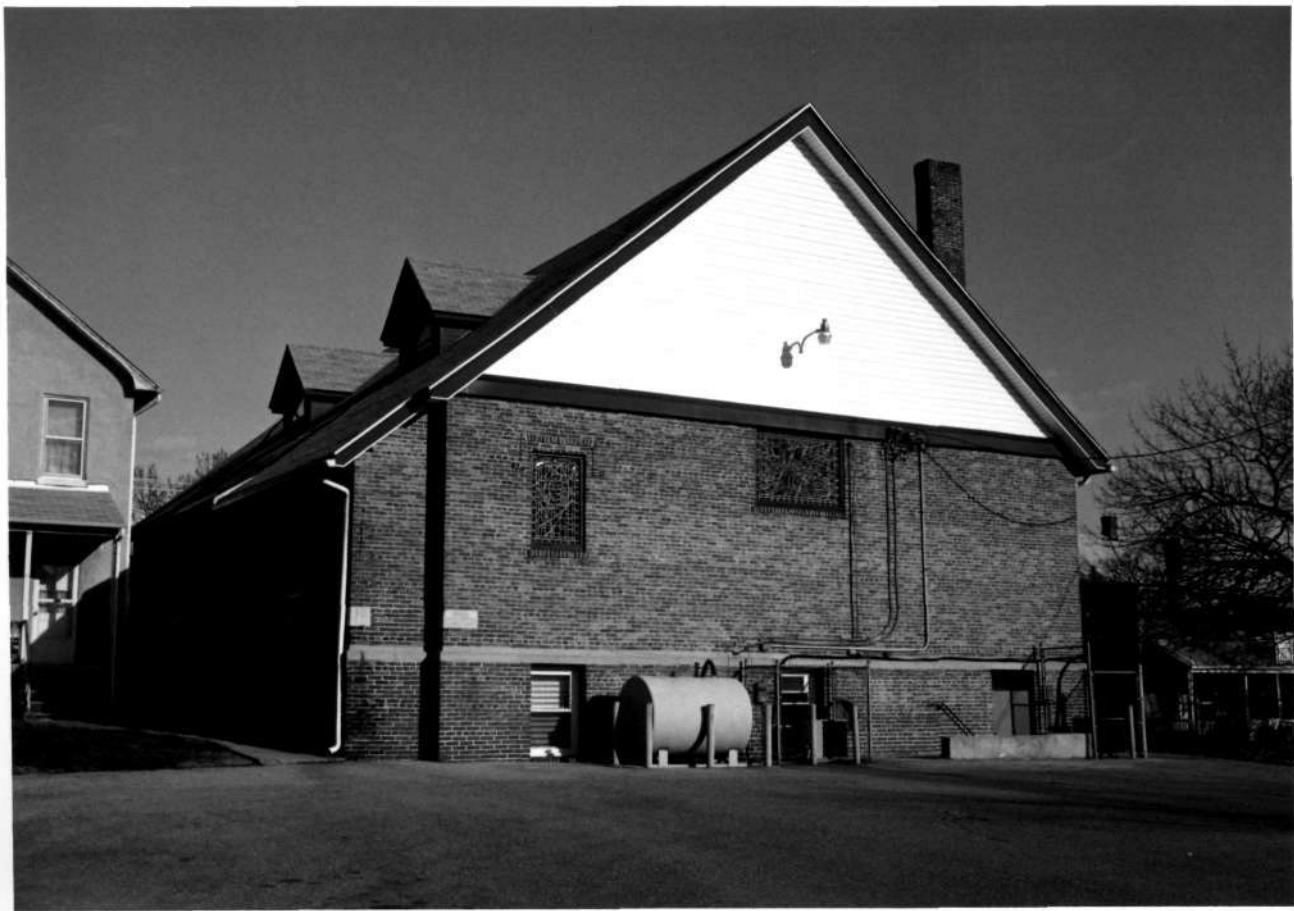
Traceries

1/00

Maryland SHPO

north elevation

2 of 4



BA 2912

Grace H.M.E. Church

67 1/2 Winters Lane, Catonsville

Baltimore County

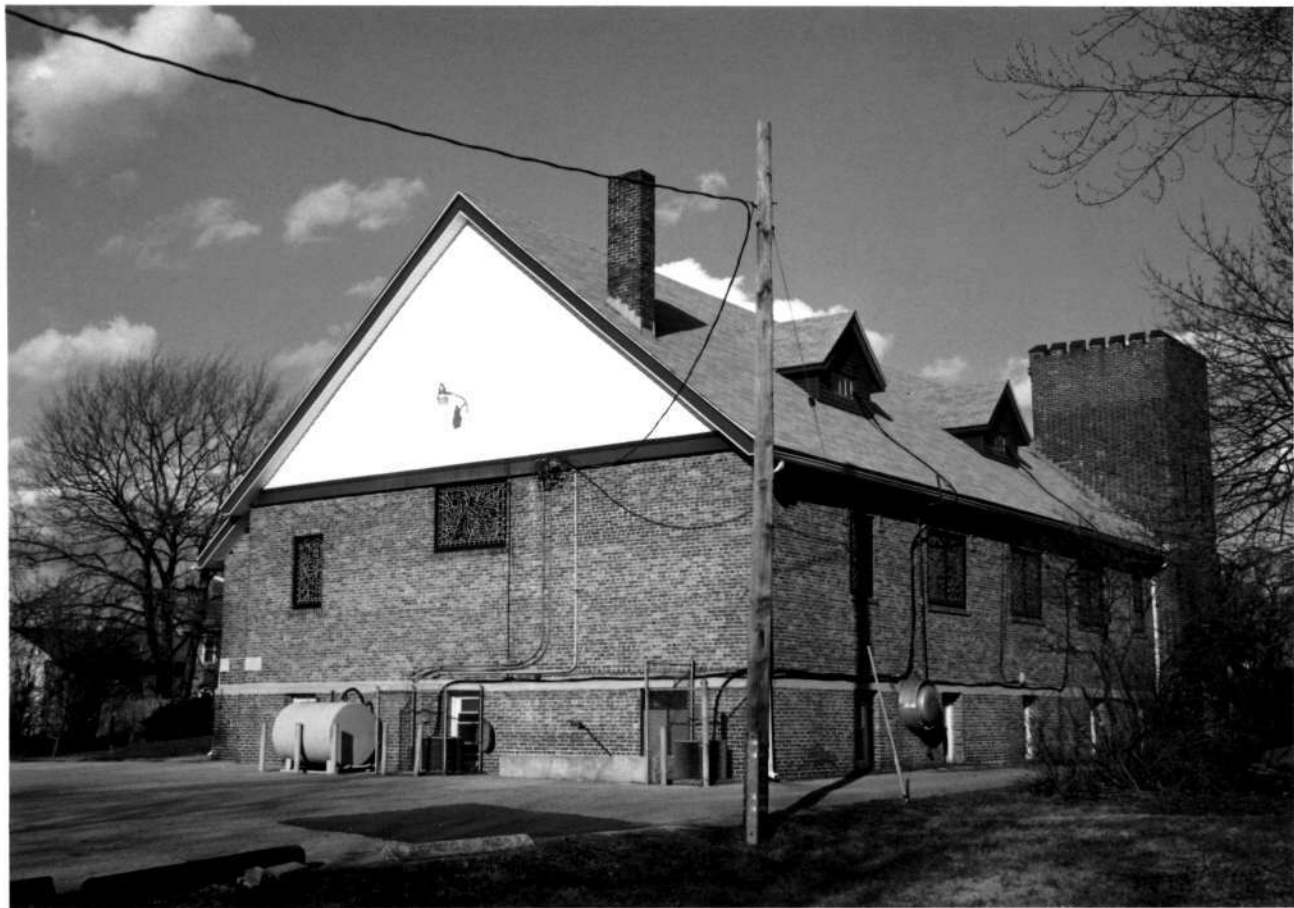
Traceries

1/00

Maryland SHPO

west elevation

3 of 4



BA 2912

Grace H.M.E. Church

67 1/2 Winters Lane, Catonsville

Baltimore County

Traceries

1/00

Maryland SHPD

southwest corner

4 of 4